843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 837 847 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 684 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

837 As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 842 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to
● 847 a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is
115 pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

842 How children are weleomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. Twins. —Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.

● 847 Children born of incest are put to death.

offender was caught in the act, he was immediately killed. If he was merely suspected of guilt both by his own lineage and by the lineage of the wronged woman, he was banished from his lineage and from the village. So swift and sure was this punishment that a rapist always fled if he believed he would be discovered. The Mossi considered rape such a heinous crime that if the act resulted in pregnancy, an abortion was attempted; if this failed, the child was killed at birth. Furthermore, the rapist could never hope to return to his community, because even if the yagenga appealed on his behalf and his lineage forgave him, the community ban still stood.[2]

The village chief was usually aware of the torts and crimes that occurred in his village, and of how the families concerned had handled them. He seldom interfered in the internal affairs of a lineage, or in problems between lineages, unless he felt that a case was beyond their legal competence. In the case of a rapist's expulsion, community feeling usually ran so high that if the chief intervened, it was only to support the will of the community. However, when people could not settle their differences peaceably or when a major crime was committed within a village, the chief usually summoned the offender to his court for trial. His right to do so was sanctioned by his possession of the nam, but the very concept of the nam often made his task difficult. If he was a commoner, the nobles often emphasized their relationship to the holder of the royal nam, the district chief, and objected to being tried by a commoner. They usually appeared at the village court if summoned, but often attempted afterward to find some excuse for taking their case to the district chief. They felt that their local reputation would prevent them from receiving a fair hearing from anyone but their lineage brother. Furthermore, if they were judged and convicted in the lower court and the verdict was confirmed in the district court, they felt that the district chief, in concurring with the village chief, had broken the solidarity of their lineage. But if they took their case directly to the district chief, they knew they were being judged by an equal or a superior, and that an unfavorable judgment would not damage their status.

The competence of the village chief to deal with court cases was limited.[3] He did pass on all the legal infractions that occurred in his village, but he tried to adjudicate only the minor cases. Thus, he tried cases involving theft, quarrels, trespassing, adultery, indebtedness, and abuse, and tried to settle them by reprimanding the guilty ones. He sent cases involving serious injury and homicide to the district court, along with cases he was unable to resolve.

The district court was a most efficient and effective judicial organ, and the nature of the Mossi judicial process was most evident on this level. The

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.

23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.

24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.

27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.

2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).

3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.

4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).

5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that